

The Safety Net

The Electronic Journal of Safe Havens International
The world's leading authority on safety, security, climate & emergency preparedness for schools

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SPECIAL EDITION: Why it is Still Safe to Go to School

**Rational Discussions on the
Sandy Hook Elementary
Shooting, with:**

- Michael Dorn
- Steve Satterly
- Gerald Summers
- Sue Ann Hartig
- Dr. Sonayia Shepherd

Resource Review Special Edition

**Thoughtful Approaches for Creating
Enhanced School Security Programs**

New Training Resources and Tools



An electronic publication of Safe Havens International

The Safety Net for April 2012

Message from the Editor-in-Chief

Chris Dorn is the Executive Producer for all Safe Havens Video projects, and he is the Editor-in-Chief of The Safety Net - the electronic journal of Safe Havens International.

He can be reached at chris@weakfish.org.



Photo: Rachel Wilson

We are sending this issue of The Safety Net on a somber note. We were not planning on releasing a newsletter for a few more months, but we felt that we should offer some thoughts from our analysts and from school safety practitioners on the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Since the morning of December 14th, 2012 we have been receiving a flood of questions from the school staff, parents, the news media and concerned community members.

To this end we have put together a special edition of The Safety Net with some initial thoughts from some of the leading experts in the field of school safety. We have video commentary on the shooting by Michael Dorn, followed by an article on key school safety concepts from his training. Dr. Sonayia Shepherd offers some tips on responding to large scale crisis events requiring a mental health response.

Schools around the country need to consider a need for this type of activity as their students return to school with questions about the Sandy Hook shooting. And we have some thoughts from two

practitioners who are currently working in schools.

What many parents don't realize, as they are focused on grades and after-school activities, is that many schools take safety seriously. Schools across the country, for the most part, have been hard at work in the background, keeping our students safe. But the past few weeks have seen a renewed zeal for pushing through efforts that are often unpleasant to consider. Schools are reviewing their plans, looking for ways to continue school safety programs in the face of budget cuts, and operating in ways to create an environment of safety, dignity, honor and respect.

There has been a lot of media coverage about this shooting and its victims. We have heard example after example of the heroism and bravery shown in Sandy Hook Elementary that morning. We must remember to honor the loss of Newtown, Connecticut with a pledge to learn, adapt and prepare so that students can continue to learn in safety in every community. I am reminded of a quote mentioned in Amanda Ripley's book "The Unthinkable" (listed in our re-

source feature). The quote is from one of the earliest scholarly articles on disaster response, written by Samuel Henry Prince. In 1920, writing about an explosion that killed 1,963 people in Halifax, Nova Scotia three years earlier, he said:

"This awful catastrophe is not the end but the beginning. History does not end so. It is the way chapters open."

It has been almost 100 years since that disaster, and history has provided no shortages of tragedies to follow it. The spate of school violence in the late 1990's began an era of improvements in school safety, but we must remember to continue our work and, as Prince put it, "Don't let it be the end."

I want to remind you that mass acts of violence, including acts of terrorism, are one of the least imminent threats to your personal safety. While these types of events are truly terrifying to experience or even imagine, the deadliest risks are usually those we think about the least.

Columbine, Virginia Tech and Sandy Hook all resulted in large numbers of fatalities. The school bombing in Bath, Michigan in 1927 killed 44 people and injured 58 others. The deadliest act of school violence in the United States was a fire that killed 95 people in 1958. But the largest loss of life in an American school was not due to an act

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The Safety Net is the electronic journal of Safe Havens International. Each issue contains feature articles written by Safe Havens analysts as well as guest authors from the fields of school safety, mental health recovery, emergency management, anti-terrorism and related fields. Monthly features include columns and visual exercises to enhance the general knowledge base in the field of school safety and emergency preparedness for the learning environment.

Safe Havens International, Inc. is the world's leading non-profit campus safety organization. Safe Havens works with K-12 schools, institutions of higher learning and faith-based organizations worldwide to improve campus climate, safety and emergency preparedness. As a non-profit center, our mission is to do what we can to make school a safe and enjoyable place for students to learn and teachers to teach, no matter where they happen to live. The Safe Havens team is comprised of international authorities and school safety, security and preparedness specialists. Our goal is to help schools improve safety while raising test scores using proven concepts tailored to fit local risks, realities and resources.

Do you want to write for The Safety Net?

If you would like to be a guest author or if you have information you'd like to see featured in an upcoming issue of The Safety Net, please contact the editor at chris@weakfish.org.

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Video Blog Special Edition: What are your initial thoughts on the shooting in Newtown, Connecticut?

Answered by Michael Dorn

Michael Dorn is the Executive Director of Safe Havens International. Michael has been directly involved in work relating to seven active shooter cases and numerous other school weapons assaults in K-12 schools in the United States and Canada. He can be reached at mike@weafish.org.



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to an act of violence. In 1937, more than 300 people were killed as the result of a natural gas leak explosion at London School in New London, Texas. For more of our thoughts on the Sandy Hook shooting, watch the video blog (above) that we released on December 17, 2012.

Coincidentally, as we were preparing this newsletter I received an email with a link to an article with information about influenza risks and some

helpful resources for understanding and responding to the flu threat. This is relevant because one of the deadliest periods in the world's history took place in 1918, not because of World War I, but because of the 1918 flu pandemic that infected 25% of the world's population and killed 20 to 50 million people globally.

While medical technology has come a long way since 1918, it is important to note that we are much more likely to die from sickness or disease

than an act of violence. This is especially relevant since we are experiencing a particularly bad flu season, even causing the governor of New York to declare a state of emergency. On that note, I will close with the article with information on flu risks and tools for preventing sickness:

<http://onlinenursepractitionerprograms.com/2012/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-2012-13-flu-season-this-little-piggy/>

Stay Safe,

Chris Dorn

Safe Havens International

School is Still a Safe Place to Be *By Michael Dorn*

On most days, we receive numerous requests for information from school staff looking for ways to make their place of work safer. Since the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting, we have been inundated with media interview requests as well. There are several important points we have been trying to convey through our media interviews:

It is important to keep a balanced perspective about the actual risk of death of school children from school shootings in relation to other deadly types of incidents. No measures are foolproof, but there are ways to reduce the risk of violence by using evidence, research and assessment-based approaches to school safety, security and emergency preparedness.

We should focus on moving steadily with an emphasis on quality over speed when it comes to safety, security and emergency preparedness measures. Sustainable, practical and effective improvements in safety are better than quick implementation of what might turn out to be a less effective approach.

As schools move to improve security, safety and crisis preparedness by re-evaluating access control, lockdown procedures, police staffing and other measures, it is important to consider the use of a formal school security assessment to thoughtfully assess local risks, realities and resources.

When a school is better prepared, the level of fear usually decreases. MSNBC in particular did a good job in addressing the understandable fears of parents and school officials in one interview.

While school shootings often dominate in media coverage, there has actually been a well-documented reduction in the per capita homicide rate on school property in the United States. There are a number of possible reasons:

- Better emergency medical care
- The development of the multidisciplinary threat assessment approach for schools
- Improved school security and access control practices
- Increased use of weapons detection strategies like random surprise metal detection, gun detection dogs, visual weapons screening, and pattern matching and recognition
- An increased awareness among staff, students and parents about the dangers of school violence and the need to take school safety seriously
- Increased willingness to report student weapons violations by many students
- Improvements in policies relating to weapons on campus, violent behaviors and triggering behaviors such as fights
- The addition of specially trained law enforcement officers in public and non-public schools



Photo: Rachel Wilson

- Increased consistency of consequences for serious violations that often precede weapons use
- Improved school design
- Improved school climate
- Improved efforts to reduce bullying

There have been many instances where students and non-students who had planned attacks on American schools have been caught before they could carry out their attacks.

The Bibb County Public School System in Macon, Georgia has averted six planned school shootings, one planned school bombing and a planned double suicide using three techniques that have since become widespread in the United States, Canada and other countries – visual weapons screening, home searches and multidisciplinary threat assessment.

While the media tends to focus on incidents that take place, they often do not learn of instances where tragedy is averted through proactive measures.

Each of us is a part of the process of creating safer schools. Most importantly, we need to have a rational approach to crisis planning with the knowledge that school is still one of the safest places that we can be.

The Mental Health Recovery Process

By Dr. Sonayia Shepherd

When considering a crisis event like the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, many tend to focus on the incident itself and the events that led up to it. But an equally important part of any mass casualty event is the emotional recovery process that must follow.

In some cases, these measures might also need to be taken if an incident happened outside of your school but still has an emotional effect on students.

Examples include the 9/11 attacks and the shooting at Sandy Hook. Some students may feel increased levels of fear or anxiety about coming to school.

Teachers, staff and parents should be observant for signs that a student is being excessively affected and offer counseling or other services as appropriate.

A popular, animated and effective keynote speaker, Dr. Sonayia N. Shepherd (Sony) has authored and co-authored sixteen books on school safety and emergency management.



Photo: Safe Havens Video

A co-founder of Safe Havens International, her work has taken her to five continents, responding to events ranging from the Indonesian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina crises to the G-8 summit. Sony has assisted large organizations, like FEMA and the WHO, as well as smaller organizations - including over 2,000 public and private schools and campuses. She can be reached at sony@weakfish.org

After a crisis, parents will want to know what information is being given to students. Having a standardized plan in place will help you better explain the type of mental health assistance available. The existence of a standardized plan will also boost the confidence of staff when responding to a crisis event.

Here are three basic steps schools should take to prepare for a mass casualty or large-scale crisis event:

1. Create a mental health recovery plan. This should be based on consultations with local experts, including, but not limited to, school mental health workers, community mental health officials, emergency management personnel and public health representatives. After completing the initial plan, update it annually. Each time it is updated, distribute the most current version to authorized personnel, including a briefing as necessary, so that it is readily available when they need it.

2. Create an education and awareness program to ensure district-wide understanding and adoption of the plan, including internal and external stakeholders - employees, students, and parents. It is critical to extend this awareness to those who have influence in both normal and crisis operations. Examples include the faith-based community, local mental health agencies, or any other organization that could assist in the process. Each partner is invaluable in building community input for your efforts.

3. Provide training for those directly involved in the execution of the plan. This should include a program to unify and coordinate any necessary recovery training. This training should be focused on demonstrating the importance of the school's recovery plan and each individual's role in that plan. As with any safety-related training, be sure to document each training session in case records are needed during future investigation or litigation.

Editor's Note: The following article was originally published on March 9th, 2012 on Michael Dorn's blog at www.safehavensinternational.org. We have reprinted it here in abridged form because it is one of the most discussed topics after the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting.

Use Caution When Making Public Statements after a Safety Incident Occurs

By Michael Dorn

Education leaders naturally want to reassure students, parents, staff and the community when a school safety incident takes place. It is quite normal for a school superintendent or headmaster to make a statement to the media like "our schools are safe" in an effort to calm fears.

However, statements of this sort, made when stress levels are high, can have two very negative and lasting consequences: increased exposure to civil liability and an increased loss of public confidence. While issues of potential civil liability exposure should generally be viewed in balance with the many other demands of effectively operating schools, they should not be ignored.

Statements that we commonly see such as "safety is our number one priority" are easily attacked and refuted in a deposition or trial. For example, an attorney may ask a school superintendent who makes such a public statement if safety is the largest budget item during a deposition. As the answer to this question will always be no, this line of questioning will likely be used to suggest that the school leader has intentionally misled the public in regards to the actual level of safety.



Photo: Chris Dorn

While this point may seem trite to some, I have seen a number of instances where a single poorly worded phrase has had a dramatic impact in school safety litigation.

Working as an expert witness in school safety malpractice cases reveals just how important wording can be. In the same manner, the media frequently uses similar tactics when covering school safety, which can do serious, long term damage to the reputation of school leaders and their organizations.

One superintendent in an affluent well-funded suburban school system made the mistake of stating that his school system was the safest district in the nation during a school board meeting while addressing an incident that had occurred. When he was challenged as to the validity of this statement by parents and the media, he stuck to his statement rather than modifying it. Area media began to hammer the superintendent and the district by reporting as many safety incidents as possible for more than a year. The damage to the district's credibility lasts to this day.

Fortunately, there are ways to help reasonably assert the organization's emphasis on safety while reducing the problems that can result from these types of statements. By carefully choosing the way such statements are phrased, school spokespersons can get the message out that safety is a priority in an honest, effective and easily defensible manner.

The first rule of thumb is to ask, "Could I prove that this assertion is true and valid in court and under oath?" For example, if we go back to the often heard statement that "student safety is our number one priority", the answer is clearly no. However, the statement "we take student safety seriously in our school district" would be much easier to validate in a district that does indeed have a comprehensive and effective safety program.

Taking the time to carefully phrase statements relating to student and staff safety can save money and can help to build rather than reduce confidence.

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If you would like to submit an article or photos for publication, please contact us through our website.

Editor's Note: The following article was originally published on April 3rd, 2012 on Michael Dorn's blog at www.safehavensinternational.org. We have reprinted it here in abridged form because it is one of the most discussed topics after the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting.

Gun Control not a Core Issue for School Shootings

By Michael Dorn

I feel the debate about gun control is a valid one, but I don't think it is a central issue that we should focus on when looking for ways to create safer schools. There are so many other strategies that are based on research or proven techniques that are also deserving of our time. We should take care not to overlook them while focusing on an area where there is still considerable disagreement even among top experts.

An organization called "Students for Concealed Carry" asserts that there have been more than 20 multiple victim shooting incidents on college and university campuses that have "gun free zones," and that there has never been this type of incident on any of the more than 200 college and university campuses where students who have a concealed firearms carry permit can carry a gun to class.

When one such law was hotly debated for Utah institutions of higher learning, a number of education leaders and school



Photo: Rachel Wilson

safety consultants predicted that campus shootings would soar. There has also not been a single shooting incident involving a student with a gun permit since that time in 2008, pretty well countering the argument that the changes in the law were going to result in a string of school shootings.

There have been a number of deadly school shootings and even more deadly attacks with other types of weapons in the People's Republic of China, where the mere possession of a single round of ammunition or a firearm results in a swiftly applied death penalty. It seems that even the

most draconian gun control approaches do not eliminate homicide from schools. Countries like Germany, Japan, Canada, England and France, which have very strict gun control legislation, also have had fatal school weapons assaults. In one attack in a German elementary school a man used a flamethrower to kill and maim a classroom full of helpless children. A knife attack in China resulted in 25 victims being stabbed and slashed, another attack resulted in 28 victims and on the day prior to the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School another brutal attacker slashed more than 20 children with a butcher knife in the PRC.

It is clear that gun control efforts can sometimes simply shift the type of weapon being used. Since the two most deadly school attacks in U.S. history involved fire (95 killed in an arson fire in a Chicago Catholic School) and explosives (more than forty killed in an attack on the Bath School in Michigan), it bears mention that alternative weapons can and have been employed in the United States as well.

At the same time, I am not convinced that students carrying concealed firearms to class will have a statistical impact on the homicide rate in our colleges

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Not on my Watch!

Stephen Satterly, Jr.

Stephen Satterly, Jr. is the Director of School Safety and Transportation at the CSC Southern Hancock County in East Central Indiana. He is a survivor of an EF3 tornado on September 20, 2002. He is a certified Indiana School Safety Specialist with more than 75 hours of FEMA training, and is currently working toward a Master's Certificate in Homeland Security through the School for Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. The author welcomes questions, other viewpoints, or any comments at satterly.steve@att.net.



This has been a rough couple of weeks for Sheepdogs, especially those who watch over children in schools. The rampage attack at Sandy Hook Elementary has caused the level of fear in this country to rise to new heights. In the aftermath, there have been numerous stories of thwarted school violence plots, students bringing guns to schools, and even an incident where a man in camouflage attempted entry into a school. All of this has whipped our fear into the type of media frenzy we usually experience in the wake of such tragedies. We cannot simply blame the media as they deliver what we watch, read and listen to the most often.

This has fueled many intensive discussions on school safety, gun control, and to a lesser extent, mental health care. These are all much needed discussions, but fear has clouded the thinking of many people to the point that they are thinking more with emotions and less with reason.

How does the Sheepdog handle fear?

LTC Dave Grossman, who came up with the Sheepdog analogy, has studied fear, among other things, and has developed some interesting insights. "When snakes, heights, or darkness cause an intense fear reaction in an individual, it is considered a phobia; a dysfunction; an abnormality. But it is very natural and normal to respond to an attacking, aggressive fellow human being with a phobia-scale response.

This is a universal human phobia. More than anything else in life, it is intentional, overt human hostility and aggression that assaults the self-image, sense of control and ultimately, the mental and physical health of human beings." Visit http://www.killology.com/art_psych_arousal.htm to read more about the effects of fear on the human mind.

The sheepdog, as well as society, must learn that this fear, as Grossman states, is normal and natural. There is no shame in being afraid. Fear can be a great motivator, when controlled.

I'll guarantee you that the teachers in Sandy Hook were terrified when the attacker stormed into their school. Yet the predominant information we currently have indicates that the principal, Dawn Hochsprung, lunged at the attacker in an attempt to disarm him and was killed. Victoria Soto confronted the attacker, lied to him about the whereabouts of her children, and was killed. Rachel D'Avino, a teacher's aide, grabbed her special needs



Photo: Rachel Wilson

student, held him close to shield him from the attacker and died.

Bravery is not the absence of fear, but the acceptance of fear, and the decision to control of oneself in the face of fear. Time and careful analysis will be required to help us determine whether these acts of valor were effective or not, but if these reports are true, these educators exhibited real confidence in the face of fear.

Those who protect children should keep up-to-date on current events, especially those related to schools. Study them, learn the warning signs of danger, and look for the warning signs in your own school. Do away with the "It can't happen here" mentality of the sheep.

Every day the news services have stories of schools where "it did happen there". So operate with the mentality that it WILL happen, and work from there. Grossman's analogy of the sheepdog is a very helpful one for those who are charged with protecting others.

Plan for what will happen, and don't do it alone. Sheepdogs are better in packs. Work with other sheepdogs and use their knowledge and resources to help with your mission. Once you have plans prepared, exercise them. Don't be afraid of failure in an exercise, because that is how you improve your plans. Exercises are the best places to fail. In an exercise, you can learn from your mistakes and suffer no consequences.

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Thoughts on Topics in the National Discussion after the Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting

By Gerald Summers and Sue Ann Hartig, J.D.

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Sue Ann Hartig was Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Evansville Inc. for over 26 years, the first female judicial officer in Vanderburgh County, and City Attorney for the City of Evansville. She received the James Bethel Gresham Award, the highest honor given by the Evansville Bar Association, the Leadership Evansville Servant Leader Award, and was one of ten finalists for the Athena Award in 2012. Hartig is Vice President and CFO of Integrity Security Protection, LLC, a safety and security consulting and training firm in Evansville, Indiana. She can be contacted at ispinc@wowway.com.

We extend our prayers and sympathy to Newtown, CT. The innocence of an entire generation was lost in an instant on December 14, 2012.

Several things have to change to reduce the number of mass shootings at our shopping malls, public spaces, movie theaters, places of employment, and schools. Here are our personal thoughts on a few topics that are receiving a lot of important discussion in the wake of the shooting:

- Access control and emergency planning and practice in schools is crucial. Administrators must acknowledge the importance of educating and training teachers, staff, students, and parents on locked doors and emergency protocols. Teachers and staff need time during the school day to learn, understand and practice their roles. Parents and guardians need to accept the importance of drills and locked doors.

- Parents and members of the community must also be ready to wait for the announced offsite reunification site instead of rushing to the school during an emergency. In Indiana, monthly fire drills are required so that they become commonplace and second nature. Lockdown drills should be mandatory, too. No system is foolproof, but if the elementary school in Newtown, CT had not had an access control system, emergency plans, and frequent drills for staff and students, more lives could have been lost.

In many schools, the single obstacle to access control systems, emergency planning, and training and practice is funding. For several years the federal Readiness Emergency Management for Schools grants empowered schools to improve safety and security, but REMS funding is now focused on bullying, an equally important issue.



- Parents and guardians have the duty to teach children that violence, anger and rage are not appropriate behaviors. They have the responsibility to monitor children's exposure to television, movies, song lyrics and video games, as well as other children or adults that promote violence.

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Editor's note: The following article was written back in August of 2012 and was slated for publication in our Spring issue, but we decided to run it in this special issue because the national perception of school violence changed dramatically on December 14th, 2012. Rather than losing relevance, I feel that this article is more important than ever because it serves to remind us of the complacent attitude towards safety that was all too common in many schools on December 13th, 2012. Let this be a reminder the next time we start to lose interest in safety as a crucial component of educating our young people. – Chris Dorn

Naysayers

By Gerald Summers and
Sue Ann Hartig, J.D.

Miguel San Martin, chief engineer for the Curiosity Rover mission to Mars, was quoted by Todd Halverson of Florida Today on August 6 as saying, "We train ourselves for eight years to think the worst all the time. If you're in the shower, you're thinking, 'What thing can give you a bad day?' I mean, that's what you do," San Martin said. "And then you can never turn it off."

Sound familiar?

Those who work tirelessly to provide safety and security to students, staff, and the public at schools, hospitals, universities or other organizations are often called naysayers and predictors of doom and gloom. We don't appear to be team players in the larger effort of projecting an image of a positive, upbeat, problem-free campus. However, those who say safety and security directors always presume the worst should be glad they are doing just that. It is only by presuming the worst, and then thoughtfully and carefully planning and implementing actions to prevent, and, if preparations fail, to respond to the worst case scenario, can they properly train others to prepare for or respond to those scenarios to mitigate loss of life. Just as students cannot learn if they are afraid,

staff cannot teach, heal, or do their jobs if they are distracted by fear. Learning what to do and when to do it frees up the students, patients, teachers, and medical providers to focus on the overriding goal of the campus, be it teaching or providing medical care.

An interesting phenomenon happens once staff members know that there is a plan and a set of protocols for crisis events. The teacher, the secretary, the aide, the tech at the nursing home or the volunteer worker can concentrate on their duties and not panic each time there is a severe thunderstorm or tornado warning.

They know where to quickly find a written copy of the protocol, and have practiced drills so emergency response actions are second nature. The calm and strength they project helps calm those they serve during a real event. Key staff members can concentrate on their respective roles after an earthquake, chemical release, plane crash or train derailment only if they know the similarities and differences between the protocols and have practiced both sheltering in place and offsite reunification plans.

Part time and temporary workers in both of the above scenarios may not necessarily have experienced multiple drills, but will know to rely on the seasoned veteran employee next door or around the corner and will know where the protocols are posted. They may forget, in the chaos of a crisis, whether to dial 9 or 0 to get

an outside phone line, what the exact street address of the facility is, or what entrance is closest to the incident site, so the written plans will need to include that information in an easy to read and easily identifiable manner.

Those who question the role of safety and security directors will say it is too inconvenient to provide coverage for all staff to be away from work for training. They will say having drills during shift changes, in the middle of the night at a hospital or nursing facility, before school hours, during lunch hour, during an assembly or special event, or heaven forbid at a sporting event, is too difficult and disruptive. But believe me, the worst case scenario will not arrive at a time that is convenient for the victims.

From practice drills come new ideas and the resolution of problems. In a drill, the grade school will find out about that one exit door that doesn't open properly. The day care facility will realize there is not have enough drinking water on hand or enough food supplies for children who are allergic to peanuts.

The high school will find out the batteries for the flashlights in the to-go bags need to be replaced. The hospital or college will find out emergency manuals are not posted in every place they need to be because a substitute teacher or retiring head nurse accidentally took a copy home.

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The Library: Learning Resource Review SPECIAL EDITION

In the past month we have received numerous requests for information on how to prepare for crisis events. This edition of our Resource Review is a compilation of a number of books that can help us understand and prepare for the stress and chaos of a crisis on campus.

The Gift of Fear by Gavin de Becker

Concepts that can Help us Better Train School Employees to Spot Dangerous People

This classic bestseller by Gavin DeBecker focuses on the inherent ability that people have to notice the subtle cues that indicate that a person or a situation can be dangerous. While many focus on purchasing high-tech equipment to help make our schools safer, few school officials receive much training in current concepts that better enable us to use our natural ability to spot danger by context of behaviors. DeBecker's landmark book came out many years ago but is still a very timely text for those campus safety officials who want to better understand how the human mind can be more effectively primed to draw on its inherent strengths and capabilities to detect potential violent people on campus.

Training at the Speed of Life by Kenneth R. Murray

Understanding how to Train People for Life and Death Decision-Making

Lt. Col. Dave Grossman was kind enough to send us a copy of Kenneth R. Murray's excellent book on law enforcement and military training concepts. Though the book is obviously focused on this type of audience, we feel that school emergency preparedness practitioners and experts can benefit from the concepts that are so thoughtfully articulate by the author. *Training at the Speed of Life* is a superb book for those who want to better understand how to prepare people for crisis decision-making.

The Unthinkable – Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why by Amanda Ripley

A Superb Book on Emergency Preparedness

Though the author does not work as an emergency management practitioner, she is an excellent researcher and did a great study on the topic of disaster survival. We gained several new and important insights from her book and recommend it highly for those who have school crisis planning responsibilities. This book provides an invaluable perspective that can help school safety professionals save lives.

Sources of Power by Dr. Gary Klein

How the Human Mind Works Under Life and Death Stress

Dr. Gary Klein is a highly regarded researcher who has performed ground-breaking work that helps us better understand how to help prepare people to make better life and death decisions. Klein's work helps us analyze why some common concepts of school emergency preparedness simply do not work well with how the human brain actually functions under this type of stress. *Sources of Power – How People Make Decisions* is a must read for the school safety professional.

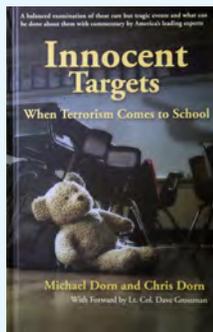
On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace

By Lt. Col. Dave Grossman - A classic text on the effects of violence and crisis stress on the mind

This excellent book is a must read for public safety, military and other personnel who want to better understand how the human mind and body work under life and death stress. I have found all of Dave Grossman's books to be immensely helpful in my work but this book has been the most useful as it provides invaluable insight into how we can better prepare people to survive life and death crisis situations at school. *On Combat* is an outstanding book for the school safety practitioner.

Fire on The Mountain: The True Story of the South Canyon Fire by John N. Maclean
An Instructive Read for School Crisis Preparedness

The book outlines a variety of decision making and other strategic mistakes that led to the deaths of a group of smoke jumpers who were fighting the South Canyon fire at Storm King Mountain in 1994. This book is helpful in understanding how people can make decisions in life and death situations, especially those that start out moving relatively slowly but then rapidly change as the crisis unfolds. This book may be helpful to those who work in the area of school emergency preparedness.



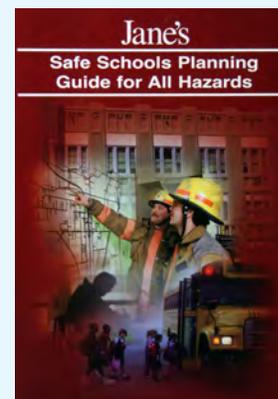
Innocent Targets: When Terrorism Comes to School by Michael Dorn & Chris Dorn
The definitive text on school terrorism

Written in 2004 following the Beslan hostage crisis in Russia, this book provides a balanced examination of the rare but tragic events of school terrorism and what can be done about them. The book puts to rest many of the dangerous myths reported in the media which actually further the aims of terrorists.

"Innocent Targets: When Terrorism Comes to School brings clarity and reason to a topic few people see clearly - and most people can't stand to consider."
- Gavin de Becker

Jane's Safe School Planning Guide for All Hazards
By Michael Dorn, Gregory Thomas, Marleen Wong, and Sonayia Shepherd

Jane's Safe Schools Planning Guide for All Hazards is the definitive reference for designing, implementing and maintaining a school crisis plan or safety plan. The book follows the four phase approach to emergency management (prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response & recovery). Written by four of the top experts in the field and supported by research and a highly critical editing process, this is one of the most thorough guides available to the process of school safety planning.



Jane's Crisis Communications Handbook
A Reference for Those who Interact with the Media After Emergency Situations

Jane's is without question the most detail oriented publisher we have ever worked with. This book is a pocket-sized guide to help public information officers, public safety officials and others who must interact with the media under crisis conditions. Like other Jane's books this book is carefully written and helpful in day-to-day work in the school safety field.



Let None Learn in Fear by Michael S. Dorn
Free School Safety E-Book

This 205-page book is a compilation of more than a decade of Michael Dorn's columns for School Planning and Management Magazine. We revised and updated the columns for this book at the urging of Les Nichols, the Vice President for Boys and Girls Clubs of America. The book is available as a PDF for free download in the resources section of our website.

Download it from: <http://www.safehavensinternational.org/resources/let-none-learn-in-fear/>

Thoughts on Topics in the National Discussion after the Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting

Continued from page 11

- Our mental health system has to be overhauled. Mental illness is a disease and should be treated as such. While we have to use care to not to prematurely label children, we can't ignore warning signs. We need to diagnose children with mental illness and intervene before children reach the age of majority. More affordable and readily available therapists and psychiatrists are needed.

Family members and friends should not be hesitant to report those with mental health issues to the authorities out of fear their loved one will be placed in jail instead of provided treatment. Specialized mental health courts similar to drug courts are needed. Mentally ill people living in the community need a system in place to help them comply with their medication needs and to notice decompensating behavior before they become a danger to themselves and others.

- America should have a thoughtful discussion relating to regulations for those who want to own guns. There should be a balance between an individual's Second

Amendment rights and the rights of innocent people to be safe. Many people feel that waiting periods and background checks will not harm the rights of collectors, hunters, or those wishing to protect their own households. Though controversial, limiting who has access to certain types of weapons or high-capacity magazines (commonly referred to as "clips") must be discussed.

While there are no simple solutions to erase the threat of violence for our schools, there are a number of approaches that we can and should discuss as a society to help reduce the risks from these rare but tragic events.

Naysayers

Continued from page 11

The middle school will determine the master key does not fit that one storage room door. The private school will notice that a nearby one-way street has changed directions and all the emergency bus route maps need to be changed.

Police and fire first responders will find out that their radios do not work when they are in the cafeteria and a booster antenna is needed. These are all things that schools and other agencies have discovered in the safe environment of a drill. The time to find these things out is during a drill, not in an actual disaster incident.

Not on my Watch!

by Steve Satterly

We must keep a balanced perspective when it comes to the things we fear most. Remember: school shootings are not now and have never been a leading cause of death in American schools. At the same time, they are sometimes especially catastrophic tragedies that we must address in our efforts to protect students and staff at school.

Being the protector of children is no easy task, especially in today's world. So study, plan, prepare, exercise, and know that you are not alone, but recognize that the price of failure is too high to bear.

Every day, millions of teachers around the world go forth with the mission of educating and nurturing young people. In many places, these educators also go forth with fear, but they persevere. Let them be an inspiration to the rest of us. School is still the one of the safest places to be. Let's keep it that way.

Non in meus vigilo!

Not on my Watch!

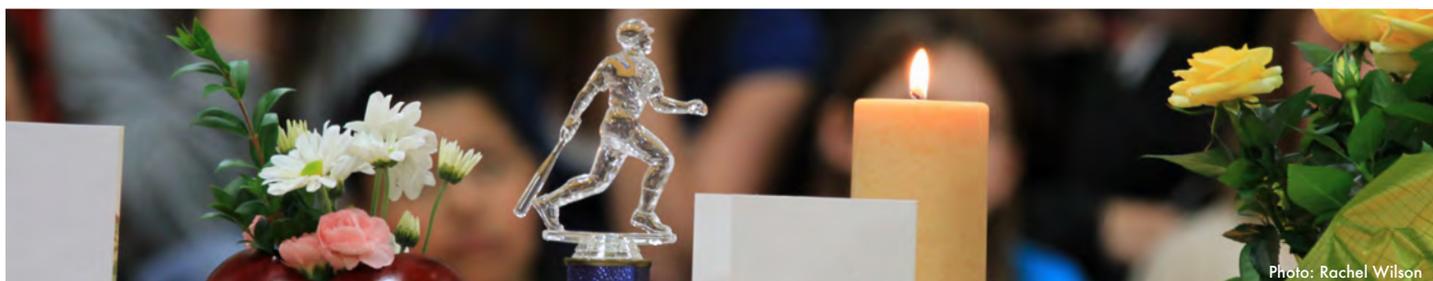


Photo: Rachel Wilson

Safe Topics: School Safety Training Video Series

Last year Safe Havens Video began releasing videos in the SAFE TOPICS school safety training video series. The first releases in the series were two sets of school crisis video scenario training tools - one edition for schools (S101: School Crisis Scenarios) and another for school buses (S201: School Bus Crisis Scenarios). Our analysts have been using these for training tools since they were in their prototype stage last fall, and we have found that they are a great tool when training groups of any size. The next three videos in the series cover Special Needs Crisis Planning, School Transportation Safety and Mental Health Crisis Recovery. The series is the culmination of more than 5 years of research and development work.

For video samples and more information on the SAFE TOPICS series, visit:
<http://www.safehavensinternational.org/safetopics/>



Photos: Rachel Wilson

Free School Safety Resources from Safe Havens International

Research article: Fight, flight or lockdown

This topical paper covers the pros and cons of teaching staff and students to attack an active shooter as a last resort. This is the culmination of an 18-month research effort by Michael S. Dorn and school security director Steve Satterly. The paper points out that while some school shootings have been stopped by this approach, people have been wounded and killed while attempting to make physical contact with armed individuals in schools.

*Fight, flight or lockdown is available for free download in the "articles" section of our Free Resources page:
<http://www.safehavensinternational.org/resources/articles/>*

"Permission to Live" web seminar

This course was produced for the Illinois Principal's Association as a pro bono effort. The association has been kind enough to allow people to access this course at no cost even though they are not members of their Education Leaders Network. The course – Permission to Live – Effective School Emergency Preparedness through Empowerment, Planning and Practice - covers research-based concepts to help prepare school employees to make more effective decisions when faced with life and death situations.

Permission to Live Direct link:

<http://www.brainshark.com/IllinoisPrincipalsAssoc/vu?pi=zGNzfg30Sz33sgz0>

Evaluating an Expert Witness for School Safety Cases

By Michael S. Dorn and Sue Ann Hartig, Esq.

This paper may be helpful to school officials, risk managers, insurance professionals, attorneys, and judges who are tasked with evaluating qualified expert witnesses for cases involving school safety. Evaluating an Expert Witness for School Safety Cases is a comprehensive research paper on this important topic. This can be a critical aspect for litigation and criminal cases involving technical questions relating to school security, school violence, bullying, student supervision, school crisis planning, school bus security, and other areas where school safety experts are often required for defense counsel and for prosecutors or plaintiff's counsel.

*Evaluating an Expert Witness for School Safety Cases is available for free download on our Free Resources page:
<http://www.safehavensinternational.org/resources/articles/>*

Gun Control not a Core Issue for School Shootings

Continued from Pg. 8

and universities either. I try to base my school safety views on data, assessment results and the experiences of my clients and think this provides a more balanced view on such hotly debated topics. Contrary to popular belief there have been a number of instances of armed citizens interrupting campus shootings at both K-12 and higher education campuses. However, the overall incident rate may not be dramatically impacted by changes in the laws on concealed carry by students and staff at higher education campuses.

Though this stance is not likely to please many people on either side of the gun control issue, more than thirty years as a full time practitioner in the field has taught me that the gun control debate is probably a lot less relevant than many people think when we look at the big picture of school safety. We have many techniques that have been proven to reduce the chances that school weapons assaults will occur and our schools have had considerable success in applying them.

We need to be sure that ample attention is given to the "what is" of school violence prevention while we discuss the "what if's". As violence is not now and never has been a leading cause of death on our



"As violence has never been a leading cause of death on campus, it is important to use a broad brush when it comes to addressing the topic appropriately."

campus, it is also important to use a broad brush when it comes to addressing the topic appropriately. The issue of school shootings is important, however, more students and staff die from other causes every year and these must be addressed as well. As but one of many examples, 40 people die at school athletic events in our nation every year because many schools still do not use \$300 lightning meters. Let us continue the debate about this important issue, but let us not allow more people to die needlessly because we are

not spending as much time discussing the proven concepts that are available to reduce the homicide rate on our nation's campuses.

Michael Dorn is the Executive Director of Safe Havens International. He can be reached at mike@weakfish.org.

Get to Know Your Students

By Charles Fleming



Charles Fleming is the director of photography and editing at Safe Havens Video.

The recent shooting in Newtown Ct. has brought many issues into the national spotlight. Like any other national events, this shooting has polarized the public on a number of different issues – gun control, mental health, the state of the nation, etc.

Though it is natural to try to look for someone or something finite to place blame or responsibility on, everyone should agree that events like these remind us that school teachers and staff have a very important role in helping students who may have violent tendencies or mental health issues. Even if the events of December 14, 2012 may have been tragic, anyone who has a child in their life should use this as an opportunity to reassess relationships. Parents need to communicate and give special attention to children with mental health issues or other individual needs. Teachers also need to pay special attention to these students, and in an effective and ethical manner.

Some people are violent or have a natural tendency towards violent behavior. Mental illness may complicate this. Finding or providing children the help they need is key to assisting these students in dealing with anger, social anxiety, violent outbursts in schools, and many other problems small and large.

In addition to things we label as “mental illness”, there are other mental health problems that many students face, often with no overt outside indication for teachers and school staff to notice. But with improved student supervision and increased student rapport, these trends can often be spotted before they become a serious problem.

Many students face serious issues including abuse, bullying, and depression just to name a few - many of these cases going unreported, misdiagnosed, or misinterpreted.

These issues, especially for teenage students, can have a powerful impact on a person’s feelings of self-worth and acceptance. A student with dyslexia, for example, may have difficulty keeping up with others in their class, potentially causing them to withdraw from their studies. A student who experiences domestic violence at home may not only have trouble paying attention in class, but may also find it hard to bond and make relationships with their peers. While most of these situations manifest themselves simply and in familiar ways, manifesting themselves through disobedience, poor grades, or social withdrawal, it does not take a leap of imagination to see how a neglected student could lash out in more violent ways.

Unfortunately, sometimes it takes an assault, a suicide, a mass shooting, or another horrific event for parents and those who care for children to wake up and realize that something has been going wrong.

I wanted to share a few resources that we have found helpful in understanding mental health issues in school age children. This serves not only to enhance safety but improve instruction.

Instead of trying to produce an easy list of action steps to guide you, we encourage you to do your own research to empower yourself in case you ever face a difficult situation involving someone with a mental issue or disability. While not every troubled student is going to pick up a weapon and begin shooting, general knowledge about the needs of individuals can help in many more basic ways in the classroom, such as in temper tantrums or fits of rage that are much more common. This serves not only to enhance safety but improve instruction.

When considering the value of research, remember to evaluate it for your local needs and context, and look for research-based programs rather than relying on programs that sound great but have little evidence to their level of effectiveness. As stated above, the following links are not endorsements but are places for you to start your search for information.

Internet Resources for Mental Health Issues

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

<http://www.nationalguidelines.org/>

<http://www.healthinschools.org/School-Based-Mental-Health.aspx>

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/getting-help-locate-services/index.shtml>

<http://www.healthyplace.com/depression/articles/depression-in-school-a-students-trial/>

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/glossary/>

<http://www.med.unc.edu/psych/psychoticdisorders/about/what-to-do>

<http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/>

<http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/index.html>

Photo from the Archives

Each issue will feature a photo from our archives that has never been used. This issue's pick is from our video production shoot in the Lincoln County School District in Newport, Oregon. Since the topic of this issue is the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook, we wanted to choose a photo that would remind us that the average school day is safe, productive and sometimes even fun. This student and her class got to take a break from their regular schedule and participate in the production of the school safety training videos the district was creating. While this did interrupt instructional time, the class learned how movies are made and got to practice their emergency procedures several times for our cameras!



Photo: Rachel Wilson

Rachel Wilson brings her unique experience to Safe Havens as a veteran photographer who has covered school safety across the United States as well as in Mexico and Bolivia. Her experience as a photographer combined with her continued service with Safe Havens provides an interesting way of viewing ourselves from a different angle while learning a thing or two in the process.



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